

# Seditious Crimes and Rebellious Conspiracies: Anti-communism and US Empire in the Philippines

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## Abstract

This article details how US colonial policymakers and Filipino political elites, intent on fostering a non-revolutionary Philippine nationalism in the late 1920s and 1930s, produced an anti-communist politics aimed at eliminating or delegitimizing radical anti-imperialism. Communist-inspired, anti-imperial activists placed US imperialism in the Philippines within the framework of western imperialism in Asia, thereby challenging the anti-imperial ideology of the US empire. Americans and elite Filipinos met this challenge by repressing radical, anti-imperialist visions of Philippine independence through inter-colonial surveillance and cooperation, increased policing, mass imprisonment, and the outlawing of communist politics in the Philippines.

## Keywords

Anti-communism, communism, imperialism, Philippines, United States of America

In early March 1931, Philippine Constabulary (PC) agents stationed in Pangasinan warned officials in Manila that a clandestine society was planning a ‘general Communist anti-American [up]rising’ in the province.<sup>1</sup> The PC believed that the ‘obvious prevalence of Red propaganda’ proved a communist presence. US officials in Washington knew nothing ‘of a serious anti-American plot with a pronounced Soviet character.’ And the *New York Times* reported that, ‘at various times

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1 ‘Manila Reports Plot of 4,000 Reds to Rebel; Says the Planned to Get Arms From Japan,’ *New York Times* (4 March 1931).

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Red Propaganda has been blamed for the frequent labor troubles of recent years,' even though no previous Philippine dispatches had indicated 'any considerable body of organized Reds.'<sup>2</sup> Despite the *Times* report, the colonial police in the Philippines, as well as Philippine and US officials in the islands, maintained that the increased 'restlessness' of the Philippine peasantry in the provinces was 'mainly instigated by the Reds.'<sup>3</sup> In fact, just two weeks prior to the *Times*' article, Alfonso Felix, chief of the Manila Legal Department, reported that he had already charged 21 'reds' with sedition as part of a crackdown on radical politics in the archipelago.<sup>4</sup>

The *New York Times*' 1931 report illustrates the increasing tendency of colonial officials to view peasant organizing and labor protests as communist-initiated. Although many of the strikes were not related to the international communist movement, colonial officials nonetheless often deployed 'anti-red' discourse in order to manage common labor protests. Even prior to the official formation of the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands (CPPI) in 1930, US and Philippine officials increasingly interpreted labor and peasant unrest as the result of what they believed to be a top-down communist organization.<sup>5</sup> Even though some officials like Philippine Secretary of the Interior, Tomas Confesor admitted, that the 'big plantations in Central Luzon' had produced a class of 'discontented tenants who have been mercilessly exploited,' most officials maintained that international communism turned the inequalities of the colonial political economy to their own advantage. In 1931, Manuel Quezon, President of the Philippine Senate, for example, claimed that 'demagogues and communists who spread subversive doctrines against peace and order to gain popularity or money' took advantage of the 'feeling of discontent due to the economic depression,' thus giving rise to the peasant protests.<sup>6</sup>

Philippine communists were only one of many groups to express anti-colonial ambitions in the early twentieth century, but colonial officials saw communists as particularly threatening because their critique situated the United States of America as part of the oppressive world-wide system of white colonial rule over non-white peoples. Despite longstanding belief among US officials that control of the Philippines was not imperial in the European sense, Philippine communists

2 Ibid.

3 RG 165 Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Military Intelligence Division, Regional File, 1922–1944, Philippine Files 3020–3300, Box 1842, National Archives, College Park (Hereafter NARA).

4 '18 More Reds to be Charged with Sedition,' *Manila Bulletin* (21 February 1931).

5 From its founding in 1929 until the merger of the Socialist and Communist Parties in 1938, the CPPI was known in English as the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands (CPPI). Historical Commission, Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas, *Communism in the Philippines: The P.K.P. Book One* (Quezon City 1996). The KAP only mentioned the USSR in the pamphlet they used to publicize their November 7th meeting in Tondo, because the Philippines was a colony of the USA, the CPPI was originally under the wing of the US Communist Party. C.B. McLane, *Soviet Strategies in Southeast Asia: An Exploration of Eastern Policy Under Lenin and Stalin* (Princeton, NJ 1966) 171–2.

6 Quoted in: M. Guerrero, 'The Colorum Uprising: 1924–1931,' *Asian Studies: Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia* (April 1967), 65–78, 77.

linked capitalism and imperialism in a way that undercut notions that US imperialism was markedly different. Anti-communists answered the perceived anti-colonial threat by suppressing the Communist Party, while also maintaining the ideology of American exceptionalism by underlining their difference from European imperialists.<sup>7</sup> The repression of the CPPI – at the very moment of its founding – saw the development of an ‘anti-red’ discourse that Americans and Filipinos then broadly applied to challenges to colonial rule, like labor protests. Anti-red discourses helped displace critiques of specific aspects of colonial relations, such as land inequality, with the notion that a foreign, top-down, communist internationalist infiltration sought to incite violence against the state. The breadth of ‘anti-red’ politics ultimately worked to limit the acceptable range of political debate and protest in the archipelago. In these ways, as communism threatened notions of US imperial exceptionalism in the early twentieth century, American and Philippine policymakers built anti-communist politics into the broader discourse of US colonial exceptionalism.

By attending to the history of communist repression in the Philippines, as well as discussions of anti-communist actions in the US, this article demonstrates how anti-communism in the interwar Philippines both maintained, and depended upon, the ideology of American exceptionalism. To begin, this article documents how Philippine communists, who saw themselves as part of an international working-class solidarity movement that sought to overturn the colonial order, became seen as a threat to the colonial state. As a way to understand the enduring historiographical challenges of studying anti-communist actors in the context of US empire, the article then turns briefly to the proceedings of the Fish Committee, in order to illustrate how US political actors forwarded anti-communist politics alongside beliefs that the US was an anti-imperial nation. Finally, in returning to an examination of the repressive measures meted out to the allegedly seditious and rebellious Filipino communists of the 1930s, the article suggests that the deployment of an ‘anti-red’ discourse was not only an effective tool for maintaining colonial power in the archipelago but also a constitutive part of the ideology of American imperial exceptionalism.

In 1930, organizers of the *Katipunan ng mga Anakpawis sa Filipinas* (KAP) – literally translated as the ‘Sons of Sweat’ and known in English as the Proletarian Labor Congress – announced a public meeting for the evening of 7 November in the Tondo neighborhood of Manila.<sup>8</sup> Curious individuals may not have recognized

7 Useful historiographies of US imperialism include: P. Kramer, ‘Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World,’ *American Historical Review*, 116, 5 (December 2011), 1349–92; F. Ninkovich, ‘The United States and Imperialism,’ in R.D. Schulzinger (ed.), *A Companion to American Foreign Relations* (Malden, MA 2003), 79–102; I. Tyrrell, ‘Empire in American History,’ *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (Madison, WI 2009), 541–66.

8 Also known as the Proletarian Labor Congress. Esteban Gonzalez, 29 June 1931, Central Decimal Files, 811b.00/68 to 811b.001/47, 1930–1939, Box 5291, RG 59, Records of the State Department, NARA, College Park. I have relied on the following histories of the Philippine Communist Party: On the history of the CPPI see: K. Fuller, *Forcing the Pace: The Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas: From Foundation to Armed Struggle* (Quezon City 2014); J. Richardson, *Komunista: The Genesis of the Philippine Communist Party, 1920–1935* (Honolulu, HA 2011); A.B. Saulo, *Communism in the*

that the meeting's date – 7 November – also marked the commemoration of the 1917 October Revolution. However, they would not have had to read much of the KAP's pamphlet to realize the organization's explicit communist political orientation. In fact, while the KAP intended the public meeting to inaugurate a new campaign to unify workers and peasants in the Philippines, they also sought to celebrate the international movement of working-class solidarity embodied by the success of the October Revolution and the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).<sup>9</sup>

Included among the KAP organizers were Crisanto Evangelista – a printer who in 1908 had helped organize the *Union de Impresores de Filipinas* (Philippines' Printers Union) and in 1919 had traveled to Washington D.C. as part of an Independence Mission<sup>10</sup> chaired by the President of the Philippine Senate and future President of the Philippine Commonwealth, Manuel Quezon – and two seasoned veterans of the Philippine peasant labor movement: Jacinto Manahan and Juan Feleo.<sup>11</sup> The new organization sought to reorganize the labor movement and strengthen ties with other international workers' movements, but was born out of a split in the broader Philippine labor movement that had developed under US colonial rule. As early as 1902, workers in the Philippines had responded to the economic changes in the islands by organizing into federations.<sup>12</sup> In the spring of 1913, delegates representing labor unions as well as nationalist and mutualist societies met at a theater in downtown Manila in order to establish a workingman's association. Comprising a 'combined total of 40,000 members,' the resultant Philippine Workers' Union, or *Congreso Obrero de Filipinas* (COF), brought together 35 organizations, though only six of these organizations represented

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*Philippines: An Introduction* (Quezon City 1990). J.A. Allen, *The Radical Left on the Eve of War: A Political Memoir* (Ann Arbor, MI 1985). For brief treatment see: J. Nery, *Revolutionary Spirit: Jose Rizal in Southeast Asia* (Singapore 2001) 122–43.

9 KAP, 'Malaking Miting Pambayan.' Available at: <http://www.CPPI1930.org/kap-public-invitation-for-november-7-1930.html> (accessed 19 October 2015).

10 On the Philippine Legislature's instructions to the Philippine Mission in 1919 see: M. Kalaw, *Self-Government in the Philippines* (New York, NY 1919), 196–202.

11 On Evangelista see: R. Simbulan, *Si Crisanto Evangelista at ang Kilusang Anakpawis sa Maynila* (Manila 2003). Manahan and Feleo were members of the *Kalipunang Pambasa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas* (KPMP), or the National Federation of Philippine Peasants. On Feleo see: B. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Berkeley, CA 1977) 51–2. According to Kerkvliet, the KPMP eventually 'denounced' Manahan after 'discovering that he had agreed to work secretly for the government,' Kerkvliet, *Huk Rebellion*, 47.

12 Melinda Kerkvliet argues that in 1902, in response to a rice shortage caused by the American war in the islands, organizers met at the house of journalist, Isabelo De los Reyes, to discuss forming a cooperative. M.T. Kerkvliet, *Manila Worker's Unions, 1900–1950* (Quezon City 1992), 6. For useful studies on Philippine labor see: D.F. Doeppers, *Social Change in a Late Colonial Metropolis: Manila 1900–1941* (Quezon City 1984); J.M. Sison, *Struggle for National Democracy* (Quezon City 1972); E.T. Ramos, *Philippine Labor Movement in Transition* (Quezon City 1976); B. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Berkeley, CA 1977); J.J. Carroll, 'Philippine Labor Unions,' *Philippine Studies*, 9, 2 (1961) 220–54. D.R. Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1849–1940* (Ithaca, NY 1976); D.G. Guevarra, *History of the Philippine Labor Movement* (Manila 1995); K. Kurihara, *Labor in the Philippine Economy* (Stanford, CA 1945); Y. Chiba, 'Cigar-Makers in American Colonial Manila: Survival during Structural Depression in the 1920s,' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol 36, Issue 3 (October 2005) 373–97.

workers' 'needs at the work place.'<sup>13</sup> Outside of Manila, workers and peasants began to organize as well.<sup>14</sup>

Before the mid-1920s, the COF officially took an 'apolitical' stance vis-a-vis US rule, although the body did support Quezon, who had served as Resident Commissioner in Washington DC from 1909 to 1916, and led the *Nacionalista* Party beginning in 1922.<sup>15</sup> Certainly, the participation of COF-member Evangelista in the 1919 Independence Mission also hints at the labor movement's engagement in debates over Philippine independence. Yet, over time, a group of labor activists, including Evangelista, saw the COF as too willing to appease US and elite Filipino interests, especially on questions of economics. Thus, by May of 1929, Evangelista and his followers split with what they termed as the 'class-collaborationist' politics of the COF.<sup>16</sup> For his part, Evangelista argued that a new organization was needed to break from what he saw as the labor movement's politics of 'friendly co-operation.' He believed that the labor movement thus far had 'upheld every capitalist-imperialist' institution while 'the workers and peasants of the Philippines become poorer and poorer every day.'<sup>17</sup> However, while the KAP organizers accused members of the COF leadership of being 'labor-fakers,' conservative elements of the COF accused Evangelista and Manahan of dividing the labor movement at the expense of workers.<sup>18</sup> Despite the hostility between the leaders of the Philippine labor movement, 6000 people gathered to listen to anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist speeches at the KAP's first public mass meeting on 7 November 1930.<sup>19</sup>

Organizers of the KAP – soon renamed the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands (CPPI) – saw themselves as part of an international working-class movement that was 'leading heroic struggles of the toiling masses against imperialism'<sup>20</sup>

13 The remaining 29 organizations represented 'mutual aid and fraternal, patriotic organizations,' *Manila Worker's Union*, 32; *Komunista*, 28.

14 Such as the largely barrio-based peasant unions, like the 1922 organization, *Kalipunang Pambasa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas* (KPMP) or National Federation of Philippine Peasants, originally the *Kalipunang Pangbasa ng mga Manggagawa at Magbubukid sa Pilipinas* or, Philippine National Confederation of Workers and Peasants. On 1922 program see: *Palatuntunan ng Kalipunang Pangbasa ng mga Manggagawa at Magbubukid sa Pilipinas*, National Library of the Philippines. See also: *Komunista*, 57.

15 *Komunista*, 35–7.

16 'Class Solidarity in the Philippines,' *Pan-Pacific Monthly* No. 78, July 1929, Folder 18, Box 25, Joseph Hayden Papers, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

17 *Ibid.*

18 The rift in the COF played out on the front pages of *Pagkakaisa*, a Tagalog newspaper. One article in *Pagkakaisa* argued that Evangelista was 'envious' while another argued that Manahan's attendance at the League of Anti-Imperialism in Paris, would further the split in the workers' movement because Manahan had not been given permission by the COF to represent Philippine workers. 'Ang Pagtungo sa Paris Ni Manahan Ay Lilikha Ng Gusot Sa Piling ng Mga Obrero,' *Pagkakaisa*, 28 June 1929; J. Quirante, untitled, *Pagkakaisa*, 17 June 1929.

19 Katipunan ng mga Anakpawis sa Pilipinas, 'Malaking Miting Pambayan,' *communism in the Philippines: The P.K.P. Book One*.

20 CPPI, 'Manifesto of the First Congress of the CP.PI.'; The 1928 Sixth Congress of the Comintern articulated that independence in the colonial world was part of the pathway towards Socialism. See R. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Historical Introduction* (New York, NY 2015), 152–9; J.D. Hargreaves, 'The Comintern and Anti-Colonialism; New Research Opportunities, *African Affairs*, 92 (1993) 255–61; M.

Yet while the CPPI pledged unconditional allegiance to the Communist International and celebrated 'the tremendous progressive advance[s] in Soviet Russia,' the CPPI saw itself not as allegiant to a foreign state but instead as part of an 'organic' world-wide working-class movement simply led by the Communist International.<sup>21</sup> The party first and foremost articulated their politics as standing for the 'political and economic freedom of all colonial and semi-colonial peoples.'<sup>22</sup> Drawing on internationally circulating Marxist-Leninist ideas, including the belief that imperialism was a product of capitalism, the CPPI advanced the position that, in addition to legal sovereignty and political self-determination, Philippine independence required an alternative economic system.<sup>23</sup>

In viewing imperialism as a product of capitalist relations, adherents of the CPPI, similar to other communists in various parts of the world, grappled with how to articulate the relationship between racial oppression in the colonial world – the global color line – and capitalist exploitation.<sup>24</sup> For example, although the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA) was in no way free of racial discrimination, its organizers publicly spoke of the racial prejudice as part and parcel of a system of US imperialism.<sup>25</sup> While the CPPI acknowledged the racialized division between white imperial nations and non-white colonies, it also recognized that US imperialism depended upon an 'unholy alliance' between Filipino 'capitalists & landlords' and 'American capital' that had systematically worked to drive the Philippines, and in particular the peasantry, 'ever deeper into bondage & debts.'<sup>26</sup>

In the Philippines, where Filipino elites and US policymakers managed the Philippine colonial state, both Filipinos and Americans were invested in maintaining the ideology regarding the exceptional nature of US colonialism.

Weiner, 'The Comintern in East Asia, 1919–1939' in K. McDermott and J. Agnew (eds), *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (London 1996), 158–90.

21 CPPI, 'Manifesto of the First Congress of the CP.PI.'

22 'Joint Manifesto of the Philippine Labor Congress (C.O.F.) and the Philippine Chinese Laborers' Association,' *Pan-Pacific Monthly* No. 78, July 1929, Folder 18, Box 25, Joseph Hayden Papers, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

23 There is a significant body of literature on the CPUSA and race, specifically in regards to African Americans. I have relied on the following sources: M. Makalani, *The Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from London to Harlem, 1917–1939* (Chapel Hill, NC 2014); R.D.G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communist during the Depression* (Chapel Hill, NC 1990); M. Naison, *Communist in Harlem during the Depression* (Urbana, IL 2005); H. Adi, 'The Negro Question: The Communist International and Black Liberation in the Interwar Years' in M.O. West (ed.) *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC 2009); M. Solomon, *The Cry was Unity: Communists and African Americans, 1917–1936* (Jackson, MS 1998).

24 V. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York, NY 2010); T. Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism: A Critical Survey* (London 2002); P. Wolfe, 'History and Imperialism: A Century of Theory from Marx to Postcolonialism,' *American Historical Review*, 102, 2 (April 1997), 388–420. A few recent studies have demonstrated the influence of non-white communist on Lenin's theories and later Comintern policies. Examples include: M. Makalani, *The Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from London to Harlem, 1917–1939* (Chapel Hill, NC 2014); J. Fowler, *Japanese and Chinese Immigrant Activists: Organizing in American and International Communist Movements, 1919–1933* (New Brunswick, NJ 2007); S. Sohi, *Echoes of Mutiny: Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anti-Colonialism in North America* (New York, NY 2014), 80.

25 'Workers Party Platform, 1928' *Investigation of Communist Propaganda* Part 5, Volume 4, 473.

26 CPPI, 'Manifesto of the First Congress of the CP.PI.'



Filipinos played key roles in distinguishing US from European imperialism and in repressing the politics of anti-colonial communists in the Philippines.<sup>27</sup> While Americans had begun the century with a plan to redistribute land in order to quell widespread resistance to US rule and prevent the development of large colonial plantations, by the end of the century's first decade it became increasingly clear that US policy would contribute to the consolidation of wealth and power in the islands instead. Poor Filipinos, and particularly those who worked as tenant farmers, faced a continual cycle of increasing indebtedness to wealthy landowners, while access to an US market allowed large landowners, particularly sugar planters, to broaden their ambitions and expand their production capacities.<sup>28</sup> For this reason, Filipino political elites, who were intent on cultivating a non-revolutionary Philippine nationalism in the late 1920s and 1930s, contributed to anti-communist politics in the islands that were aimed at eliminating or delegitimizing challenges to colonial rule.

Yet the CPPI's critique of Filipino elites did not mean that they overlooked the issue of the colonial color line: though CPPI arguably directed their greatest ire towards Filipino politicians and landholders, they did so as part of a broader attack on capitalism and imperialism, or what party members understood was a global and systemic problem.

In labeling the USA as a primary power in the shaping of the global capitalist system – and in identifying the problem as linked to the relationship between US capital and Filipino capitalists – the CPPI countered the notion that the USA acted

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27 In 1902, after US troops had suppressed a sustained Philippine insurrection against American rule, the US Congress passed 'the Organic Act' and established the contours of civilian government in the islands, including the formation of the Philippine Assembly. In 1916, Congress transferred greater governing power to Filipinos with the passage of the Jones Act, stipulating that only Filipinos could serve in the Philippine Assembly. Moreover, Filipinos, since the passage of the Organic Act, increasingly served in administration roles, or the daily operating procedures of the colonial state. By 1930, Americans comprised only one per cent of civil servant jobs in the Philippines. The Filipinization of the US colonial state did not, however, translate into greater political, economic, or social equality for the majority of Filipinos. As the US colonial state grew, so too did the number of national, provincial, and local political positions and family members of the Philippines' most powerful families delivered these new positions in the colonial state to other family members in order to ensure continued power in their home provinces. Kramer argues that greater Filipino inclusion in the colonial state and 'fiesta politics,' or the increase of Filipino-American sociability, worked to erase the 'uninvited presence' of the US Empire. P.A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC 2006); Benedict Anderson, a scholar of Southeast Asian politics, argues that the American colonial period strengthened the political power of the Philippine oligarchies. B. Anderson, 'Cacique Democracy in the Philippines: Origins and Dreams,' *New Left Review*, 169, May–June (1988). See also, R. Constantino, *A History of the Philippines: From Spanish Colonization to the Second World War* (New York, NY 2010), 300.

28 'Communist Seeds Sprouting in North Warns T. Confesor,' *Manila Times* (1 January 1931). On land policy: J. Putzel, *A Captive Land: The Politics of Agrarian Reform in the Philippines* (Manila 1992), 49–61. On sugar see: J.A. Larkin, *Sugar and Origins of Modern Philippine Society* (Berkley, CA 1993); F.V. Aguilar, *A Clash of Spirits: The History of Power and Sugar Planter Hegemony on a Visayan Island* (Honolulu, HI 1998); U. Bosma, J.A. Giusti-Cordero and G.R. Knight (eds.) *Sugarlandia Revisited: Sugar and Colonialism in Asia and the Americas, 1800–1940* (New York, NY 2007); OD. Corpus, *An Economic History of the Philippines* (Quezon City 1997).

as an exceptionalist, anti-imperial force in the world. Thus, in seeing itself as part of the contemporary anti-colonial struggle waged by communist parties in 'India, Indo-China, Indonesia, Malaya, Korea, [and] Formosa,' the CPPI argued that the USA, like European empires, contributed to an oppressive global color line.<sup>29</sup> The international working class consciousness the CPPI hoped to provoke in Philippine laborers went beyond the boundaries of nationalist affinities; when Philippine communists drew lines of solidarity that extended far beyond the archipelago's 7107 islands, they threatened to disrupt the very system of nation-states that US policymakers used to distinguish US colonial policy from European imperialism, and which US policymakers viewed as critical to the maintenance of world trade.<sup>30</sup> Because the CPPI relied on a rhetoric that saw little difference between the 'capitalistic-imperialistic' countries of the world, the organization directly threatened the notion that the USA functioned as an exceptional empire.<sup>31</sup> In short, the CPPI's vision of international solidarity critiqued the promises of liberal empire building in the Philippines and undercut notions of US colonial exceptionalism.

Even though the CPPI arguably never posed a credible revolutionary threat to the colonial state, its anti-imperial agitation directly challenged the idea that the USA eschewed self-interest and sought only to guide Filipinos to political modernity.<sup>32</sup> In comparison to other national parties the CPPI was relatively small *and* lacked substantive or sustained coordination with the other national Communist parties.<sup>33</sup> Yet, less than a year after the KAP's inaugural rally, the CPPI leadership sat in prison on charges of sedition.

As communist anti-imperial movements grew during the interwar period, not simply in the Philippines but across the colonized world, anti-communists in the Philippines and in the US State Department scrambled to find ways to contain the popularity of communist movements out of fear that such movements would destabilize the colonial order.<sup>34</sup> Certainly, US officials objected to an interpretation of

29 Ibid.

30 Geographer Neil Smith calls this process where entrenched 'assumptions about what kinds of social activities fit properly at which scales' scale bending. N. Smith, 'Scale Bending and the Fate of the National' in E. Sheppard and R.B. McMaster (eds), *Scale and Geographic Inquiry* (Oxford 2004), 201.

31 'Class Solidarity in the Philippines,' *Pan-Pacific Monthly* No. 78, July 1929, Folder 18, Box 25, Joseph Hayden Papers, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

32 Recent work on the colonization of the Philippines includes but is not limited to: P. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, The United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC 2006); W. Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines* (Durham, NC 2006); V. Rafael, *White Love: And Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham, NC 2000); A. Foster and J. Go (eds), *The American Colonial State in the Philippines: Global Perspectives* (Durham, NC 2003); A. McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison, WI 2009); M. Hawkins, *Making Moros: Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule in the Philippines' Muslim South* (Dekalb, IL 2012); S. Harris, *God's Arbiter: Americans in the Philippines, 1898–1902* (New York, NY 2011); D. Brody, *Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines* (Chicago, IL 2011).

33 C.B. McLane, *Soviet Strategies in Southeast Asia: An Exploration of Eastern Policy Under Lenin and Stalin* (Princeton, NJ 1966)

34 A.L. Foster, 'Secret Police Cooperation and the Roots of Anti-communism in Interwar Southeast Asia,' *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 4, 4 (Winter 1995).



communist politics that questioned the ability of liberal states to emancipate workers from the miseries caused by the crises of capitalism in the 1930s. But US and Philippine officials also worried about the ability of communists to gain followers by 'exploiting' the racial divisions of the colonial world. For example, in 1931, when Governor General of the Philippines, Dwight Davis wrote to General F. Le J. Parker, Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs in the USA, regarding his decision to '[take] a stronger hand' with the communists and use the power of the state to limit the growth of the movement, he conveyed his strategy for insuring that his actions did not damage the carefully managed image of US–Filipino racial relations. Davis informed Parker of his plan to have the colony's Secretaries of Justice and the Interior – both positions held by Filipinos – bring sedition charges against communist leaders. Davis told Parker that he had arranged to 'be away on a trip' when the charges were filed so as to 'remove any possibility of confusing the issue by injecting the element of racial prejudice.'<sup>35</sup> In other words, Davis wanted it to seem as if the Filipino communists had been charged by Filipino officials, and thereby avoid any suspicion that white US officials oppressed a non-white Filipino political organization. Davis used the racial dynamic of US imperialism – in which Filipinos held key roles in the colonial state – as a strategy for distancing US policy makers from accusations that the USA was part of the same racialized order that characterized European colonial rule in Southeast Asia.

Anti-communism, however, did not simply emerge as a response to communism in the Philippines. Even before the formation of the CPPI, anti-communists expressed a worry that communists were working to 'incite race feeling' and 'stir about trouble' in the Philippines. For example, in 1925, six years before the founding of the CPPI, the wealthy Philadelphia lawyer Francis Ralston Welsh, who had, on his own, decided to investigate 'subversive organizations' in the USA wrote to U.S. Secretary of State, Frank Kellogg, urging him to have 'local authorities' look into the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) in Manila. According to Welsh, the FOR, an interfaith peace organization founded in 1915, was 'thoroughly communistic' and 'exciting what [it] calls 'subject peoples' against countries controlling the territory in which they live.'<sup>36</sup> Welsh regularly supplied US military intelligence with his reports on subversive organizations, many of which were filled with beliefs about the susceptibility of non-white peoples to the political agitations of white communists. Welsh's letter to Kellogg shows that US authorities were interested in monitoring 'subversives' even before there was an official communist presence on the islands, and that the US interest centered on the racialized threat of anti-colonial agitation.

A 1931 memo written by Governor General of the Philippines Dwight F. Davis, in which he explains that the communist movement in the Philippines had to be contained because 'there are many very ignorant people in the country districts,'

35 Davis to Parker, February 6th, 1931, Box 1296, General Classified Files, Bureau of Insular Affairs, RG 350, NARA, College Park.

36 Francis Ralston Welsh to Frank B. Kellogg, Central Decimal Files, 1910–1929, Box 7718, RG 59, Department of State, NARA, College Park. It is not clear if Kellogg returned this letter or not.

reveals the extent to which the racialized thinking of US imperialism continued to be used by anti-communists against the 'Philippine masses,' whom Davis felt did not have the intelligence or political capacity to assess communist ideologies themselves.<sup>37</sup> However, despite their obvious disdain for the rights of 'subject peoples,' anti-communist officials like Welsh and Davis were clearly worried about the possibility of non-whites uniting across national lines through their shared politics.

Racialized and classed conceptions about the perceived lack of political capacity of the Philippine peasantry were not new in the Philippines. Indeed, as numerous scholars have shown, US colonial governance depended on constructions of racial and civilizational hierarchies in order to justify US rule in the archipelago. As US and Philippine officials repressed Communist politics, they also reinforced racialized and classed conceptions about the perceived political capacities of non-white people and helped sustain white colonial rule over non-white peoples.

Anti-communism emerged in the Philippines not simply as a response to the formation of the CPPI, but rather as part of the politics of American imperial exceptionalism – the very ideology that US officials had drawn upon to justify US, and later elite Filipino, rule over Philippine people. In this way, US anti-communism was deeply intertwined with American political ideas about the colonial order and the place of the USA within that order.

Attending to interwar-period US imperial history complicates historiographical understandings of US anti-communism that have otherwise focused primarily on the development of domestic laws, networks, and institutions.<sup>38</sup> Historians' endeavors to highlight the continuity between pre-and-post Second World War anti-subversive politics by uncovering state-level anti-Communist policies have connected the First Red Scare of the post-First World War years to the Cold War, and in so doing have detailed the networks of local anti-communist political actors and institutions of the 1920s and 1930s that would, in the postwar era, fuel broader Cold War anti-communist politics. But unfortunately, even this work has all too often ignored US imperial history and thereby viewed anti-communism as a response to local conditions rather than as a facet of the politics of American imperial exceptionalism.<sup>39</sup>

37 Davis to Stimson, Philippine Files 3020–3300, Box 1842, 1922–1944, Regional File, Military Intelligence Division, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG 165, NARA, College Park.

38 For comprehensive history see: N. Fischer, *Spider Web: The Birth of American Anti-communism* (Urbana, IL 2016) and E. Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston, MA 1998). On loyalty oaths: M.J. Heale, *McCarthy's Americans: Red Scare Politics in State and Nation, 1935–1965* (Athens, GA 1998), 28–54. On laws against flying red flags see: M.J. Heale, *American Anti-communism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830–1970* (Baltimore, MD 1990), 60; On anti-communism as the 'institutionalized version of anti-radicalism, nativism, and Americanization movements' see: L. Ceplair, *Anti-communism in Twentieth Century America: A Critical History* (Santa Barbara, CA 2011), 13. W. Preston argued against the notion that the Palmer Raids were a response to mass public 'hysteria.' Instead, he sees the raids as part of a longer tradition of anti-radical politics. W. Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903–1933* (New York, NY 1966) 191–3.

39 Scholars of cultural studies have used imperial methodology more readily than history. For a clear example see: J. Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War* (Minneapolis, MN 2010).

Despite the recent growth in literature on the colonial Philippines, histories of US imperialism and interwar anti-communism in the United States of America have continued to flow in separate historiographical streams. Though there are notable exceptions, few scholars make connections between US anti-communism, characterized most often as a domestic project, and US rule in the colonial Philippines, which is viewed in terms of foreign policy. This separation is particularly striking in light of historians' increased interest in transnational history.<sup>40</sup> Scholars of interwar US anti-Communist politics have detailed the breadth and diversity of anti-communist politics, illustrating the flexibility of a discourse that, as Landon Storrs has argued, historical actors enacted 'at various places and moments in defense of class, religious, and racial hierarchies.' Nonetheless these studies have tended to overlook the imperial dimensions of US society and, as a result, the ways that imperial encounters shaped historical actors' understandings of social categories ranging from race and gender to labor and conceptions of civilizations.<sup>41</sup>

This is not to suggest that US imperialism *wasn't* qualitatively different than European variants; however, as numerous comparative studies of European imperialism have detailed, imperial power and colonial rule qualitatively differed between European imperial powers and even across imperial sites of the same empire.<sup>42</sup> Certainly, empires shared characteristics and even techniques for sustaining imperial rule. In fact, the colonial state in the Philippines, not dissimilar from the policies of other colonial powers in the region, repressed communism as well as other radical labor and anti-colonial movements through increased policing, mass imprisonment, and the criminalization of the party-based Communist politics.

Finally, while historians have emphasized the ways that anti-communism did not simply equate to an anti-Soviet position but instead encompassed a much

40 Key texts on transnational methodology include, but are not limited to: M. Siegal, 'Beyond Compare: Comparative Method after the Transnational Turn,' *Radical History Review*, 91 (Winter 2005); G. McCormick, L. Briggs and J.T. Way, 'Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis,' *American Quarterly*, 60, 3 (2008). My understanding of transnational history is informed by efforts of new imperial historians to decentering the nation. For examples see: F. Cooper and A. Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, CA 1997); A.M. Burton, *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and Through the Nation* (Durham, NC 2003); A.S. Thompson (ed), *Writing Imperial Histories* (Manchester 2013).

41 Storrs, *The Second Red Scare and the Unmaking of the New Deal Left*, 6. See also: J. Luff, *Commonsense Anti-communism: Labor and Civil Liberties between the World Wars* (Chapel Hill, NC 2014). See also: L.R.Y. Storrs, *The Second Red Scare and the Unmaking of the New Deal Left* (Princeton, NJ 2013); G. Erickson and J. Joel (ed.) *Anti-communism: The Politics of Manipulation* (Minneapolis, MN 1987); A. Goodall, 'The Battle of Detroit and Anti-communism in the Depression Era', *Historical Journal*, 51, 2 (June 2008); C. Doody, *Detroit's Cold War: The Origins of Postwar Conservatism* (Champaign-Urbana, IL 2012). Among key texts that make this latter point: P. Kramer, 'Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World,' *American Historical Review* (Dec 2011), 1348–91; K. Chang, *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.-Canadian Borderlands* (Berkeley, CA 2012); M. Jung, 'Seditious Subjects: Race, State Violence, and the U.S. Empire,' *Journal of Asian American Studies* (June 2011), 221–7; A. Stoler, *Haunted by Empire* (Durham, NC 2006).

42 For a particularly relevant example see: M. Thomas, *Violence and the Colonial Order: Police, Workers, and Protest in the European Colonial Empires, 1919–1940* (Cambridge 2015).

broader range of political positions, the divide between the 'foreign' and the 'domestic' remains firmly entrenched in the literature on interwar US anti-communism.<sup>43</sup> Like histories of the CPUSA, many treatments of the Philippine communism have debated the extent to which the Comintern, through emissaries from the CPUSA and the travel of a small cadre of Filipinos to Moscow and China, influenced the ideological direction and organizational strategies of the CPPI.<sup>44</sup> Certainly, focusing on the movement of organizers who worked for the CPUSA, Comintern, or an affiliated organization such as the Pan-Pacific Trade Union (PPTU) brings to light the dynamism of 1920s and early 1930s internationalist movements.<sup>45</sup> Yet, by focusing on the relationship between the Comintern and nationally based Communist parties, or by focusing solely on the development of anti-communism within the USA, histories of interwar US and Philippine anti-communism have too often assumed that internationalism – that is the ideological commitment to building solidarity among workers across national boundaries – arose from Comintern directives. Attempting to locate the root of the CPPI's or CPUSA's internationalism by focusing significant attention on the question of the Comintern influence can conflate 'internationalism' with the Soviet Union, which, in turn, can obscure the ways that communist activists saw the US colonization of the Philippines as a force, along with capitalism, that had already 'globalized,' or internationalized, social relations in the Philippines. Histories of US and Philippine anti-communism have taken less seriously the influence that other international dynamics, such as US imperialism might have played on the development of the CPPI's internationalist politics. Debating the influence – either material or political

43 On 'foreign' and 'domestic' as mutually constituted discourses see: A. Kaplan, *Anarchy of Empire* (Cambridge, MA 2001), 1–23.

44 Though one can find brief histories of the Philippine Communist Party in many books, for comprehensive histories see: K. Fuller, *Forcing the Pace: The Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas: From Foundation to Armed Struggle* (Quezon City 2014); J. Richardson, *Komunista: The Genesis of the Philippine Communist Party, 1920–1935* (Honolulu, HA 2011); A.B Saulo, *Communism in the Philippines: An Introduction* (Quezon City 1990); University of the Philippines, Third World Study Center, *Marxism in the Philippines* (Quezon City 1984). CPUSA organizer, James Allen, traveled to the Philippines during the interwar period: J.A. Allen, *The Radical Left on the Eve of War: A Political Memoir* (Ann Arbor, MI 1985); For debates on Philippine Marxism see: Third World Study Center, *Marxism in the Philippines: Marx Centennial Lectures* (Quezon City 1984) and P. Abinales (ed.), *Revisiting Marxism in the Philippines* (Manila 2010).

45 This is not to suggest that the CPUSA and the CPPI operated independently from the Comintern. Both organizations received funding from the Comintern and looked to the Soviet Union as a revolutionary model. Theodore Draper's two-volume history *Roots of American communism and American communism and Soviet Russia* centered on the question of the relationship to the Soviet Union. A generation of revisionists histories, best represented by M. Isserman's *Which Side Were You On: The American Communist Party During the Second World War* (Middletown, CT 1982) focused on the social history of the CPUSA. After the fall of the Soviet Union a school of 'traditionalists' led by John Earl Hynes and Harvey Klehr adopted a strikingly anti-communist tone in their book *In Denial: Historians, communism, and Espionage* (San Francisco, CA 2003). Hynes and Klehr are particularly interested in the Comintern relationship and the question of 'espionage.' J.E. Hynes and H. Klehr, *The Soviet World of American communism* (New Haven, CT 1998); J.E. Hynes, H. Klehr and F. Frisov, *The Secret World of American Communism* (New Haven, CT 1991). Jacob Zumoff offers a strong rebuttal to Hynes and Klehr, arguing that Hynes and Klehr treat Leninism and Stalinism as 'at most variations of one another,' J. Zumoff, *The Communist International and U.S. communism, 1919–1929* (Leiden 2014), 19.

– of the Comintern on either the CPPI or CPUSA is not the same as *assuming* that Communist internationalism evolved simply because of the Comintern party line.

An imperial framework allows us to see how the development of anti-communist politics in the Philippines was not simply a matter of curtailing the popularity of the party within the Philippines or cultivating a particular kind of anti-colonial nationalism, although anti-communist politics certainly aimed to achieve both goals. As scholars have argued, communist and other left-wing internationalist movements threatened the political status quo by rooting their visions for political change in a geography not based solely on the nation-state but rather on a politics that sought to build solidarity across international boundaries. Yet, by neglecting to connect US colonial history in the Philippines to a wider history of anti-communism in the colonial world, historians have, intentionally or not, reinforced the ideology of American imperial exceptionalism by ignoring the ways imperialism shaped US culture and politics.<sup>46</sup> An imperial reading of anti-communist history helps us see how anti-communist politics emerged out of and, in turn, further developed the notion that the United States of America was a colonial power unlike any other.

This problem is not, however, simply the product of historians choosing to focus solely on history within the continental USA.<sup>47</sup> Throughout the twentieth century, historical actors including politicians continually espoused American exceptional ideas and, in doing so, contributed to the erasure of American imperial history. Primary sources that continue to inform historical work are littered with examples of imperial exceptionalism, although seldom detected. Relying on materials of high-profile anti-communist events in the USA, such as the Fish Committee hearings, has likely led many historians of US anti-communism to the conclusion that US politicians cared little about anti-communism in the US colony in the Philippines. Yet, when analyzed in the context of American exceptionalism and imperial history, the proceedings of the Fish Committee can take on a new significance.

In October 1930, the House of Representatives' Special Committee to Investigate Communist Activities in the United States wrapped up two days of hearings in Los Angeles, California. L.A., where major corporations worked in

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46 It has become commonplace for historians to qualify statements about the emancipatory promises of international communism and the Soviet Union with acknowledgments of the violence wrought by the consolidation of power in the Soviet Union and other post-Second World War Communist states. Indeed, historians have often treated the outlook of the international Communist movement as having embraced either a naively or a strategically flawed utopianism. The politics of anti-communists, on the other hand, are analyzed as either rational responses to a real or perceived threat *or* as an expression of irrational, mass politics. Though a full discussion of this subject is outside of the scope of this article, I argue that historians need to treat the world vision of anti-communists – and their attempts to shape the world in their vision – as equally utopian.

47 An important exception, particularly relevant to the Philippines and US policy: A.L. Foster, 'Secret Police Cooperation and the Roots of Anti-communism in Interwar Southeast Asia,' *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 4, 4 (Winter 1995), 331–50; See also: H. Streets-Salter, 'The Noulens Affair in East and Southeast Asia: International communism in the Interwar Period,' *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 21, 4 (Winter 2014), 294–414.



tandem with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) to infiltrate and suppress unions and political organizations was a fitting site for the hearings.<sup>48</sup> That month, the Special Committee – which was led by Fish – heard testimony from William ‘Red’ Hynes, a former ‘labor spy’ who had famously infiltrated the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).<sup>49</sup> In addition to his testimony, Hynes provided the Committee with over 1500 documents he had collected during his investigations of labor, communist, and other radical organizations in Los Angeles.<sup>50</sup> To assist in digesting the information, he had organized his evidence into ten thematic sections, with titles such as ‘youth educational institutions’ and ‘Trade and labor unions.’<sup>51</sup> One section, ‘Anti-imperialism, Latin America, the Orient, Colonies,’ brought together material on communist activities across a wide swath of the world and specifically addressed an organization called the All-American Anti-Imperialist League (AAAIL). Hynes argued that the AAAIL was a communist front organization, ‘stirring up suspicion, hatred, and opposition in Latin America and the Orient,’ and directed against ‘the British Empire, the United States, and other of the so-called capitalist countries.’<sup>52</sup> Hynes told the Fish Committee that not only did the AAAIL, which was based in Mexico City but had a branch office in Los Angeles, recruit Asians – including Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino laborers – it also organized white workers in the USA to advocate for immediate independence in the Philippines on the basis of working-class solidarity.<sup>53</sup> Fish, however,

48 A. Goodall, ‘Red Herrings? The Fish Committee and Anti-communism in the Early Depression Years,’ in R. Goldstein (ed.) *Little Red Scares: Anti-communism and Political Repression in the United States, 1921–1946* (London 2014), 74–5; A. Goodall, *Loyalty and Liberty: American Countersubversion from World War I to the McCarthy Era* (Champaign-Urbana, IL 2013); R.J. Goldstein, *Political Repression in Modern America from 1870 to 1976* (Champaign-Urbana, IL 2001).

49 J.M. Laslett, *Sunshine Was Never Enough: Los Angeles Workers, 1880–2010* (Berkeley, CA 2014). D.R. Healey and M. Isserman, *California Red: A Life in the American Communist Party* (Champaign-Urbana, IL 1993); C. Heatherton, ‘Relief and Revolution: Southern California Struggles against Unemployment in the 1930s’ in M.H. Jung (ed.), *The Rising Tide of Color: Race, State Violence, Radical Movements across the Pacific* (Seattle, WA 2014); K. Olmstead ‘Bleeding Edge: New Deal Farm Mediation in California and the Conservative Reaction,’ *Journal of Policy History*, Vol.6, Special Issue 1 (January 2014), 48–72; E. Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity: Mexican Americans and the Los Angeles Police Department, 1900–1945* (Berkeley, CA 1999).

50 F.J. Donner, *Protectors of Privilege: Red Squads and Police Repression in Urban America* (Berkeley, CA 1990).

51 Other sections include: ‘communist organization,’ ‘communist party activities and propaganda,’ ‘against United States military establishment,’ ‘alien legislative activities,’ ‘defense,’ ‘friends of the Soviet Union,’ ‘opposition by the Los Angeles,’ and ‘tentative suggestion for federal regulations.’ *Investigation of Communist Propaganda, Hearings Before a Special Committee to Investigate Communist Activities in the United States of the House of Representatives, Seventy-First Congress, Part 5, Volume 4* (Washington D.C. 1930), 3.

52 *Ibid.*, 32.

53 M. Stevens, ‘Hands Off Haiti! Self-Determination, Anti-imperialism, and the Communist Movement in the United States, 1925–1929,’ *Black Scholar*, 37, 4 (2008), 61–70. K. Burt, ‘The American Communist Party’s Spanish Bureau: Third Period Activities and some Subsequent Impact,’ *American Communist History*, 11, 3 (2012). R.M. Bao, ‘The Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas between the East and Latin America’ *Latin American Perspectives*, 35, 2 (March 2008), 9–24. Though the organization might have been a new discovery for members of the Fish Committee, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had been tracking the AAAIL in Mexico since at least the summer of 1927. The FBI investigated the connection between the AAAIL alongside of the bureau’s investigation of a political boycott against US goods in Mexico. United States, Federal Bureau of Investigation,



expressed little interest in the AAAIL, telling Hynes, 'what I want to find out is not what is happening in Mexico but what is happening in the United States.'<sup>54</sup> Fish, who focused primarily on the 'do-nothing policy' of the federal government, was mainly interested in communist activity in the United States of America. He largely focused the Committee's inquiries on uncovering Soviet agents allegedly plotting to overthrow the US government. Even when Hynes warned the Committee that individuals involved in organizations like the AAAIL organized workers around the idea that the USA was an imperial power, Fish expressed little interest. The response from the Committee regarding Hynes' findings reveals its inability, or perhaps refusal, to consider the USA as an imperial power. Despite Hynes' warnings about workers organizing across the territorial boundaries of nation-states, the Fish Committee only understood the geography of political power through the lens of national boundaries.<sup>55</sup>

Throughout the hearings, Fish, his congressional colleagues, and their witnesses expressed a familiar anti-immigrant xenophobia that historians have rightly associated with pre-Cold War anti-communist and anti-radical politics.<sup>56</sup> When Fish first went before the House Appropriations Committee to seek funding for his proposed committee, he argued that the US federal government could not tolerate communism because it introduced an 'alien system' that threatened to undermine the US republican form of representative government. Yet, instead of drawing on the nativist language of the Palmer Raids and the First Red Scare, Fish used an imperial precedent – the Monroe Doctrine – to argue that the US federal government should police communists.<sup>57</sup>

Since the mid-nineteenth century, American statesmen had invoked the Monroe Doctrine as a way to distinguish American commercial, political, and military

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'Anti-Imperialist League,' San Antonio, TX, 3 June 1927, *FBI Records: The Vault*. For more on the FBI's work on Mexico during the 1930s see: D.W. Raat, 'US Intelligence and Covert Operations in Mexico 1900–1947,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 22, 4 (Oct 1987), 615–38; R. Schmidt, *FBI and the Origins of the Red Scare in the United States, 1919–1943* (Copenhagen 2000).

54 When Fish spoke to the Committee on Rules seeking appropriations for his special committee he argued that the US government 'adhered to a do-nothing policy' because, according to Fish, 'the Federal government has practically no power to deal with the activities or the propaganda of any of the communists in the United States.' *Hearing before the Committee on Rules, House of Representatives*, H. Res 180, Thursday April 17, 1930 (Washington D.C.), *Investigation of Communist Propaganda*, 36.

55 M.H. Jung, 'Seditious Subjects: Race, State Violence, and the U.S. Empire,' *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 14, 2 (June 2011), 221–47; A. Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge 2005).

56 For particularly succinct description of the US 'counter-subversive tradition' and the idea of an 'alien external force' see: E. Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston, MA 1998), 46–8. On the psychological dimensions of anti-communism see: J. Kovel, *Red Hunting in the Promised Land: Anticommunism and the Making of America* (New York, NY 1994). For a critique of the idea that anti-communism sprang forth from 'maelstrom of fear, rage, and anxiety' see: N. Fischer, 'The Founders of American Anti-communism,' *American Communist History*, 5, 1 (2006), 68–102.

57 On anti-communism as a continuity of American nativist and anti-radical traditions see: L. Ceplair, *Anti-communism in Twentieth Century America: A Critical History* (Santa Barbara, CA 2011). W. Preston argued against the notion that the Palmer Raids were a response to mass public 'hysteria.' For studies that emphasize the continuity of nativist, anti-radical, and 20th anti-communist movements see: W. Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903–1933* (New York, NY 1966) 191–3.

interventions in Latin America from European colonialism. By 1930, when the Fish Committee began its hearings, the United States of America maintained colonial control over the Panama Canal Zone, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam, Hawaii and other Pacific Islands. Additionally, within the previous two decades the US military had already intervened in Nicaragua, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, the Soviet Union, as well as numerous other locales.<sup>58</sup> However, despite the exertion of US economic, military, and political power, invoking the Monroe Doctrine was a way for US politicians to justify US power – that to many looked like imperialism – while claiming the USA was merely protecting the sovereignty of foreign nations.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, the Monroe Doctrine served as proof of the anti-imperial nature of US foreign policies and in the wake of the First World War, alongside the rising prominence of anti-colonial movements and Lenin's calls for self-determination, US policymakers used the Monroe Doctrine to argue that US expansion eschewed territorial conquest and simply followed objective economic law.<sup>60</sup>

With the exception of a handful of places, the fact that the USA regularly intervened in foreign nations yet formally maintained few colonies allowed US policymakers to distinguish US power from European imperialisms. Even in places like the Philippines, US policymakers drew upon an ideology of 'benevolent assimilation' to justify conquest and colonization while maintaining a belief that US foreign policies were qualitatively different from European imperialism. Despite the fact that US colonial policies were as grounded in ideas about racial and civilizational superiority as the French *mission civilisatrice* or the British ideology of 'civilization, commerce, and Christianity,' US policymakers nonetheless appeared to believe that, while Europeans sought domination over foreign populations, the US instead fostered nationalism, democratic development, and eventually, sovereign independence.

What is most interesting about Fish's invocation of the Monroe Doctrine, and what historians have thus far overlooked, is how this instance exposes the ways that US anti-communists grappled with the inherent geographic tensions US foreign policies produced. With the increasing reach and depth of capitalism came the extension of capitalist social relations that, in the Philippines as elsewhere, linked people in new ways, not simply through improved technologies of communication, but also through the movement of labor and goods. In other words, what Kornel Chang has called the 'de-territorializing prerogatives of capital' had come into sharp tension with the project of a global working-class movement that threatened to break down national boundaries. Anti-communists used the Monroe Doctrine

58 W.A. Williams, *Empire as Way of Life* (New York, NY 1980).

59 Over the past couple of decades, historians have illustrated the multifaceted forms and geographic diversity of aggressive US expansion during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. How and why US policymakers invoked the Monroe Doctrine varied depending on historical context. For a thorough treatment of the Monroe Doctrine in the nineteenth century see: J. Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, NY 2011).

60 In *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization*, Smith argues that 'US expansionism was entirely justified because it followed economic law,' N. Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley, CA 2004), 186–7.

to distance US policy from European imperialism and demonstrate the USA's commitment to the sovereignty of foreign nations. But they also simultaneously enacted policies directed at breaking down national borders so that US goods and capital could travel easily across political boundaries, challenging the 'imagined integrity of the nation-state.'<sup>61</sup>

International communism not only threatened to disrupt the entrenched geography of political power – the nation-state – that the US empire depended upon, it also struck at the problem US policymakers continually faced: facilitating the need to facilitate expansionary capitalism while maintaining the sharp borders of US nationalism. Contrary to what Fish told Hynes, the committee *did* care about the spread of communist ideology in places outside of the continental USA. In fact, Fish requested that US embassies and foreign consulates send the inquiry examples of anti-communist laws used by foreign governments around the world.<sup>62</sup> Thus, it is important to see that for politicians like Fish, anti-communist politics were bound to the sense that the USA was an anti-imperial nation.

Because it was a pillar of their hold on power, not only in places like the Philippines but also in Latin America where the USA lacked official colonial states, Americans put great effort into sustaining the ideology of US colonial difference. Yet, Vandenberg claimed that such a view was not only inaccurate but that they did so with the belief that it represented reality. Indeed, as historians Jay Sexton and Ian Tyrell recently argued, 'whereas few American statesmen would have labeled themselves "imperialists," almost all would proclaim themselves to be 'anti-imperialists.'<sup>63</sup> For instance, in 1931, Arthur Vandenberg, a member of the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, who advocated that the US government should take steps towards granting Philippine independence, stated that it was 'ridiculous to think of [the Philippines] in terms of a throttled and exploited colony.' 'An insult to thirty years of altruistic American leadership.'<sup>64</sup> Vandenberg believed such conceptions were an insult to US colonial rule in part because he thought the Philippine people were the 'most progressive, prosperous, and happy people, relatively speaking, in the whole Far East.'<sup>65</sup> Like Fish, Vandenberg held fast to the notion of US imperial exceptionalism and, in doing so, seemed to dismiss the notion that Asian and Latin American workers viewed the USA as an imperial power or that US workers might, independent of foreign or subversive influence, decided to agitate against US imperialism in the Philippines.

61 K. Chang, *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.–Canadian Borderlands* (Berkeley, CA 2012), 6. Two impressive studies on how the US enacted policies that forced open national boundaries and facilitated the mobility of goods and capital see: E. Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy* (Durham, NC 1999) and C. Veesser, *A World Safe for Capitalism: Dollar Diplomacy and America's Rise to Global Power* (New York, NY 2002).

62 800.00b House Investigations, Beginning with File 176, Box 4727, 1930–1939, Central Decimal Files, Department of State, RG 59, NARA, College Park.

63 I. Tyrell and J. Sexton, 'Introduction' in I. Tyrell and J. Sexton (eds), *Empire's Twin: U.S. Anti-Imperialism from the Founding Era to the Age of Terrorism* (Ithaca, NY 2015), 7.

64 L. Kaplan, *The Conversion of Arthur H. Vandenberg: From Isolation to International Engagement* (Lexington, KY 2015), 6–7.

65 'The Philippine Issue that Faces Congress,' *New York Times* (16 August 1931).

Viewed from an imperial history approach, the example of the Fish Committee demonstrates how deeply intertwined the ideology of US colonial difference – and even the erasure of US imperialism – and anti-communism truly were.

Even before the founding of the CCPI, anti-communists sought to prevent critiques of American imperialism from finding an audience outside of the Philippines. A message from the Harbin-based American Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) in August 1927 revealed that US officials recognized the need to police the boundaries of Philippine politics beyond its territorial borders. Four years before the CPPI would hold its first Congress, and five years before the colonial state would outlaw the CPPI, the ONI received the memorandum written by an attaché stationed in Harbin, a city in the northeastern Chinese territory formerly known as Manchuria.<sup>66</sup> In the memo, the Harbin ONI agent described how an unnamed informant disclosed that ‘his organization’ had received a handful of telegrams regarding plans for a series of world-wide ‘communistic uprisings’ beginning in Mexico. In addition to the planned revolt in Mexico, the agent wrote, ‘at the same [time] an uprising was to take place in Panama and Chile’ as well as in Paris, Lyon, Marseilles, Liege, and ‘in Germany.’ After receiving the memo, the ONI drafted a report to the US State Department titled ‘Soviet Activities in the Philippines Islands and Other Places’; within six weeks, the State Department had shared the memo with its Far Eastern, Mexican, and Eastern European Affairs divisions. The geographic range of uprisings revealed by the memo makes it clear as to why the State Department chose to share the intelligence across its divisions. Yet, the ONI report did not comment on the suspected uprisings in Latin America or Europe. Instead, the Harbin agent requested only that the State Department pay ‘special attention’ to the included paragraphs ‘regarding activities in connection with the Philippine Islands.’ According to the agent’s unnamed informant, a ‘commission was on its way to the Philippines’ with plans to ‘start trouble in the Philippines, Dutch East Indies, and French Indo-China.’ As a result, anti-communists in the Philippines began stepping up their efforts to surveille the mobility of people and ideas in and out of the archipelago.

Anti-communists closely watched communications between communists in the Philippines and anti-imperial activists in other parts of the world, in particular when communists’ anti-imperial critique seemed to fail to differentiate between American and European policies in Southeast Asia. In a report to the Bureau of Insular Affairs in 1928, the Philippine Constabulary (PC) raised concerns about exchanges between Jacinto Manahan, a longtime labor and peasant organizer, and Manuel Gomez, the Secretary of the US Section of the AAAIL. The AAAIL’s claim that the repression of the CPPI in the Philippines was part of a broader project of managing foreign understandings of US race relations caused anti-communists to take notice. US policymakers worried that Gomez’ organization linked US interventions in Latin America and the Caribbean with the violent

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66 K.S. Patton to Secretary of State, Central Decimal Files, 811b.00/68, 1930–1939. Box 5291, RG 59, Records of the State Department, NARA, College Park.

discrimination against African Americans in the United States of America, and further to colonialism in the Philippines. In particular, the PC believed that Gomez had sent Manahan pamphlets that might damage 'American prestige in the islands' if they were distributed 'among the ignorant classes in the Philippines.'<sup>67</sup>

Indeed, Gomez did send Manahan pamphlets and many of these focused on the system of elite rule and capitalist exploitation that AAAIL organizers believed characterized the Philippines under US colonialism. In fact, elite rule of the Philippines helps explain how, prior to the establishment of the CPPI in August 1930, some Filipino anti-imperialists directed their critique of American imperialism and capitalism at Filipino politicians.<sup>68</sup> Evangelista and his CCPI contemporaries understood the enrichment of a native political elite as part of the mutually constitutive processes of capitalism and imperialism, in which 'American capital [was] penetrating & dominating more & more the various industrial & agricultural enterprises in the P.I.'<sup>69</sup> For example, in 1928, Anacleto Alemanana – who lived in Chicago but would return to the Philippines and join the CPPI – argued that the contemporary leaders of the Philippines, 'such as Quezon, Osmena, Roxas, and others,' had a 'tendency to collaborate with the American capitalist.'<sup>70</sup> Alemanana further argued that Filipinos needed to 'stop flattering ourselves by imagining [that] a great American capitalist statesmen' would 'someday come down from heaven and crown us with freedom.'<sup>71</sup> Alemanana's letter reveals that the CPPI was organized around a set of politics that pre-existed the party itself.

And though the CPPI embraced ideas about international solidarity, it did not do so at the expense of nationalist politics. Instead, the CPPI advocated for a transformation in the nature of governance that would ensure workers greater representation and control: any movement for Philippine independence must also include a shift in the global political economy. In fact, Evangelista argued that working-class Filipinos had been 'plunged into the world movement and became a part of the world class struggle,' and therefore Philippine independence was part of

67 Memorandum for Chief of Constabulary (12 September 1928), 898.00b/675, Box 7718, Central Decimal Files, 1930–1939, Records of the State Department, RG 59, NARA, College Park.

68 As their General Secretary, the Central Committee elected, Crisanto Evangelista, a printer who in 1908 had helped organized the *Union de Impresores de Filipinas* (Philippines' Printers Union) and had traveled in 1919 to Washington DC with Quezon's Independence Mission. The Committee elected Antonio Ora, a founding member of the *Partido Obrero* or Workers' Party, as Chairman. For list of 35 original members of the Central Committee see: *communism in the Philippines: The P.K.P. Book One*, 124.

69 CPPI, 'Manifesto of the First Congress of the CPPI.'

70 Anacleto C. Alemanana to Pablo Manlapit, 5 January 1928, *Investigation of Communist Propaganda, Hearings Before a Special Committee to Investigate Communist Activities in the United States of the House of Representatives*, Seventy-First Congress, Part 5, Volume 4 (Washington DC 1930), 1270.

71 Ibid. A few years later, the General Secretary of the CPPI, Crisanto Evangelista described the Philippine nationalism that had developed through the US colonial system in an equally damning way: 'it is clear that the different political parties of the [Filipino] burgesses are no different from one another,' he stated in 1933: 'they have but one aim; to rise into power and exploit with independence or not; to enrich themselves and strengthen the control of a government which is pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist.' *Official Gazette*, Vol XXXI, 7 September 1933, Joseph Hayden Papers, Box 25, Folder 17, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

a much broader struggle for the 'political and economic freedom of all colonial and semi-colonial peoples.'<sup>72</sup> In January of 1931, when Jacinto Manahan spoke at the funeral of Antonio Ora, a longtime labor advocate, he argued that,

under the present order, we work and somebody else gets the money... we do not promise heaven to the masses under the communistic regime... but we want to try a new experiment. We want to eliminate the injustice of the present economic system.<sup>73</sup>

By linking the history of US imperialism to capitalism, radical anti-imperialists in the Philippines argued that their liberation had to include the eradication, or at the very least transformation, of both.

Yet, the language the CPPI used to assail the colonial state – and particularly elite Filipino rule of the state – would end up providing evidence that the organization threatened the 'public peace' and 'security of the state.'<sup>74</sup> It did not take long for anti-communists to mobilize the colonial police regime against the newly formed CPPI. Indeed, immediately, after the party's founding in late 1930, the Philippine state intensified the persecution of the communist-inspired anti-colonial activists, banned individuals associated with the party 'from using the P.I. mails,' and forbade the party from holding 'mass meetings in public places.'<sup>75</sup> Amid the economic downturn of the Depression, anti-colonial uprisings in neighboring colonies, and a general strike that paralyzed shipping and commerce in late January 1931, the colonial government decided to increase its 'intensive war on Bolshevism.'<sup>76</sup> The Philippine state further attempted to limit the spread of communist ideology within the archipelago when, during the first few months of 1931, it instructed provincial governors to not issue permits for meetings managed by 'red agitators.'<sup>77</sup> The Philippine Constabulary also arrested radical leaders on charges of sedition, including long-time peasant organizer and CPPI member Juan Feleo in the Province of Nueva Ecija and Evangelista, Manahan, and Dominador Ambrosio in Manila. In Bacolod, on the island of Negros, the PC seized Guillermo Capodacia and accused him, like

72 'Class Solidarity in the Philippines,' *Pan-Pacific Monthly*, 78 (July 1929), Joseph Hayden Papers, Folder 18, Box 25.

73 'Ora Funeral' *Manila Bulletin* (31 January 1931).

74 Decision of the Supreme Court, No. 36453, 28 September 1932, Joseph Hayden Papers, Box 25, Folder 17, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor Michigan.

75 'Says Soviet Spreads Philippine Sedition,' *New York Times* (20 March 1930); 'Activities of Communist in Philippines Revealed,' *New York Herald-Tribune* (21 March 1930).

76 Frank Sherman, 'General Strike in Philippines Halts Shipping,' *New York Tribune* (28 January 1931); 'Officials join forces in war against reds,' (2 February 1931). The French colony in Indo-China faced considerable challenges to colonial rule during the Yen Bay Mutiny in February 1930 and the Nghe Tinh strikes in 1930–1. On colonial police response see: M. Thomas 'Fighting "Communist Banditry" in French Vietnam: The Rhetoric of Repression after the Yen Bay Uprising, 1930–1932,' *French Historical Studies*, 34, 4 (2011), 611–48. For regional dynamic see also: A.L. Foster, 'Secret Police Cooperation and the Roots of Anti-communism in Interwar Southeast Asia,' *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 4, 4 (Winter 1995).

77 Memorandum for the Superintendent, Intelligence Division, Series Seven, Subject Files, Constabulary Philippines, 1929–1943, Manuel Quezon Papers, National Library of the Philippines, Manila.



the others, of sedition.<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, in preparation for the CPPI's 1 May parade, colonial officials made it clear to organizers that if they marched they would be met with 'tear-gas bombs and riot-guns' furnished 'to the police by the U.S. Army.' In May, the PC arrested 62 suspected communists who marched in the parade.<sup>79</sup> CPPI members filled the jails throughout that spring, but the most striking case of political repression occurred when the CPPI held its first congress. According to the *New York Times*, on 31 May the PC launched the 'largest raid in the history of the Philippines.' The raid resulted in 'more than 300 communists' behind bars in Manila's jails.<sup>80</sup>

Following the arrests, Mariano Albert, a Filipino judge who had held numerous positions in the colonial state, found 23 leaders of the CPPI guilty on 'charges of sedition and crime against the fundamental laws of the state.' In addition to one year imprisonment and fines, 20 members of the leadership were 'banished' to seven different provinces in Luzon, where they would be kept 'under close watch' by provincial commanders of the PC.<sup>81</sup> The defendants promised to appeal. Evangelista filed suit against the Mayor of Manila, Tomas Earnshaw, claiming that he had been deprived of his constitutional rights and that the mayor had unfairly revoked the CPPI's assembly permits.<sup>82</sup> Evangelista demanded that Earnshaw – an engineer, industrialist, and Quezon appointee – reinstate the permits; in 1932, the Philippine Supreme Court took the case.

In its case against Evangelista and the CPPI, the colonial state used the organization's bylaws as evidence of the CPPI's intent to overthrow the state. During CPPI meetings, the state argued, 'seditious speeches were made urging the laboring class to unite by affiliating to the Communist Party of the Philippines in order to be able to overthrow the present government.'<sup>83</sup> Justice James Ostrand – a veteran of the Philippine-American War who had stayed in Manila to practice law and risen to a seat on the Supreme Court in 1921 – declared that the CPPI had no constitutionally protected rights to free speech. His ruling drew upon an 1884 decision from the Spanish colonial courts formulated to combat the anti-imperialist movement against Spain and on the 1925 US Supreme Court ruling in *Gitlow v. New York* that allowed for the suppression of speech deemed as a direct threat to the government. In short, the Court argued that, if left unrestricted, the CPPI might

78 'Red Doctrines are Seditious Fiscal Rules' *Manila Bulletin* (12 March 1931); 'Fear Union of Colorums and Red Force,' *Manila Bulletin* (2 February 1931); 'Fiscal Will Accuse 18 Men Here Today of Seditious Acts,' *Manila Times* (2 February 1931).

79 S. Carpio, 'May 1st in the Philippines.'

80 '300 Filipino Reds Arrested for Sedition; all Refuse Bail, Jamming Overtaxed Jails,' *New York Times* (1 June 1931).

81 '23 Reds Sent to Jail, Will Appeal Cases,' undated newsclipping, Hayden Papers, Box 25, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor Michigan.

82 Evangelista alleged that the Chief of the Manila Police Department revoked the permits and licenses needed to hold 'any private or public meetings in the city.' Even before their eventual arrest in May, the Communist party alleged that they had been prevented from holding meetings since the 6 March 1931. *Official Gazette*, Volume XXXI, No. 107, 7 September 1933, Decision of the Supreme Court, 28 September 1932, Joseph Hayden Papers, Box 25, Folder 17, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

83 Ibid.

resort to violent dissent.<sup>84</sup> The Court even praised Mayor Earnshaw for his actions, claiming that he ‘should be praised and commended for having taken a prompt, courageous, and firm stand towards the said Communist Party of the Philippines before the latter could do more damage.’<sup>85</sup> To protect the colonial state, the Court appealed to legal precedents from two colonial rulers, Spain and the United States of America.<sup>86</sup>

The colonial state’s ability to demarcate certain political visions as potentially violent threats to the social order revealed exactly what colonial anti-communist hoped to achieve in their repression of the CPPI. By banning the CPPI from political participation, anti-communists used the authority of the state to remove alternative visions of independence from the political sphere, while at the same time shoring up the dominant class’ hold on state power.<sup>87</sup> The Court’s claim that the CPPI and those affiliated with it aimed to ‘incite class struggle’ – and that the ‘purpose of such association [was] to alter the social order’ – was not wrong. The CPPI *did* advocate for a revolutionary reordering of the social order in the Philippines. But the court’s decision cast the CPPI’s vision for transforming the colonial rule in the Philippines as outside of the bounds of the acceptable political order – an order that, of course, was constructed to protect the colonial state from challenges to its rule – grew out of beliefs about the exceptional nature of US imperialism.<sup>88</sup>

A memo from the Chief of the Western European Affairs Division of the State Department clarifies how US policymakers rationalized the repression of anti-imperial communists in the Philippines. The arrest, jailing, and eventual prosecution of communists, the State Department chief argued, was distinctly in-line with

84 In its ruling against the CPPI, the court cited the 1925 U.S. Supreme Court finding in *Gitlow v New York*, which upheld the conviction of Gitlow, a socialist, based on the argument that the government may suppress free speech if such directly advocates the overthrow of the government. On Gitlow case see: M.R. Lender, *Gitlow V. New York: Every Idea an Incitement* (Lawrence, KS 2012).

85 ‘Official Gazette, Vol XXXI, 7 September 1933’ Joseph Hayden Papers, Box 25, Folder 17, Bentley Historical Library.

86 Committee on Un-Filipino Activities (CUFA), ‘The Illegality of the Communist Party of the Philippines’ Congress of the Philippines, House of Representatives, Manila, Bureau of Printing, 1951, American Historical Collection, Ateneo De Manila University.

87 The state, according to Max Weber, has no inherent substantive content and is a tool for ideological and political ends. In other words, the state can serve the interest of anyone who gains control of it. K. Duncan, *The State of the Political: The Conceptions of Politics and the State in the Thought of Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Franz Neuman* (Oxford 2003).

88 In 1930, the US exerted colonial control over only a handful of territories; generally US foreign policies in the early twentieth century sought to foster trade, construct regional alliances, and integrate European colonial economies and independent nations, such as those in Latin America, into a global rather than metropole-oriented economies. In colonial Southeast Asia and the Pacific in the 1920s, for example, US policymakers and businessmen found a way to break through colonial preferences and generate inter-colonial trade. For a thorough treatment of US policy in Southeast Asia in the interwar period see: A. Foster, *Projections of Power: The United States and Europe in Colonial Southeast Asia, 1919–1941* (Durham, NC 2010); In her book on the Institute of Pacific Relations, an influential think-tank of the 1920s–1940s, Akami shows how Americans did not challenge the colonial (European, American, and Japanese) status quo in the 1920s as much as mediate the relations between imperial powers. T. Akami *Internationalizing the Pacific: The United States, Japan, and the Institute of Pacific Relations, 1919–1945* (London 2001).

the US 'position vis-à-vis Asiatic nationalism.' The Chief of Western European Affairs wrote, 'we have disclaimed all intention of permanent occupation of the Philippines and have pledged ourselves to fit them for and accord them eventual independence.'<sup>89</sup> This policy certainly marked US colonial policy as different in the region. Yet, more importantly, the letter illustrates how US policymakers believed that by supporting anti-communist nationalism in the Philippines, the USA could simultaneously cast US policy as anti-imperial while at the same time justifying anti-communist politics.

In order to protect challenges to the colonial state in the Philippines, and with it notions of American colonial exceptionalism, the Philippine Constabulary relied on information supplied by Americans stationed in consulates and embassies in various parts of the world. In February of 1930, C.H. Bowers, Superintendent of the Intelligence Division of the Philippine Constabulary, wrote to Davis, who had moved from his position as Secretary of War to Governor General. Bowers informed Davis that the American Chargé d'Affairs in Finland had tracked Jacinto Manahan's travels through Finland on a nearly five-month long journey that, according to Bowers, took Manahan through Shanghai, Moscow, Berlin, and Frankfurt, where he participated in 'the last days of the Anti-Imperialistic League Conference.'<sup>90</sup> Yet, as Americans stationed around the globe fueled anti-communist politics through reports on anti-colonial activities, US policymakers stationed in Southeast Asia tended to view communism through the lens of racialized anti-colonialism. For example, in late July 1930, the US Consul in Saigon, Henry S. Waterman, prepared a report titled 'Investigation of communism in French Indo-China.'<sup>91</sup> The report, essentially a summary of articles written by Franco-Vietnamese journalist Henry de Lachevrotière, argued that communism in Indochina differed greatly from European communism elsewhere, in that 'here it is not a question of a struggle between classes' but instead a 'plot against French domination of the country with the avowed purpose of obtaining the complete independence of Indo-China.'<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, Waterman reported that the party's 'ultimate aim' included 'expelling whites from the country.' According to Waterman, Lachevrotière's articles described the communist party as terrorists who wreaked havoc on the 'unfortunate peasants' through kidnapping, torture, and extortion. Nonetheless, Waterman concluded, 'most of [his] articles are

89 Department of State, Division of Western European Affairs to Castle, 14 May 1931, CDF 1930–1939, Box 5291, RG 59, Records of the State Department, NARA, College Park.

90 Headquarters, Philippine Constabulary, 19 February 1930, General Classified Files, 1914–1945, Box 1296, RG 350, Bureau of Insular Affairs, NARA, College Park.

91 In report on communism one year earlier, Waterman informed the State Department that Laos was 'still in a state of savagery' and 'could not understand revolutionary doctrine' and that Cambodians were a 'lazy and good natured race, who have fish in abundance' and therefore 'it is obvious that among such people communism could find no foothold.' Communist Activities in French Indo-China, 12 May 1930, Henry Waterman, American Consulate, Saigon, French Indo-China, Consular Posts, Saigon, French Indo-China, Volume 133, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, NARA, College Park.

92 Investigation of communism in French Indo-China, Henry S. Waterman, American Consulate, Saigon French Indochina, 30 July 1931, Consular Posts, Saigon, French Indo-China, Volume 134, RG 84 Records of Foreign Service Posts, NARA, College Park.

supported by alleged facts.' Even after the leadership of the communist party in Indochina, including Nguyen Ai-Quoc (Ho Chi Minh) were arrested, and 'no news of serious trouble [was] coming from Tonkin,' Waterman still believed that 'constant vigilance' was still required.<sup>93</sup> Waterman offered to share these reports with Governor General of the Philippines Dwight Davis, believing they would 'be of interest to the Department as showing the methods of operation of the communist party in Asia.'<sup>94</sup> Although Davis had expressed the belief that US colonial officials in Southeast Asia should compare regional information on communism and anti-colonialism, sharing information across colonial boundaries was a complicated affair: all reports from Americans were routed through the State Department in Washington D.C. and only forwarded to other locations if the State Department deemed it prudent.<sup>95</sup>

Yet, despite the State Department's clear protocol, Davis was not the only colonial official who sought to streamline the process of information sharing across national boundaries. In 1931, the *Algemeene Recherche*, or the Dutch Secret Service in Batavia, also requested that the USA share information on communist activities in the Philippines.<sup>96</sup> US foreign service officers around the world readily shared information via the State Department; however, when it came to coordinating anti-communist politics with colonial powers in Southeast Asia, the State Department encouraged Americans in foreign service posts to report information on communists, but not to formalize any kind of coordinated police effort. Concerned that cooperation with the colonial powers might lead to a global division with 'the white colonial powers on one side and the color-conscious masses of Asia on the other,' the State Department steered away from official inter-colonial coordination.<sup>97</sup> Interestingly, the Secretary of War, Patrick Hurley, believed that communication between colonial officials in the Philippines and colonial officials elsewhere in Southeast Asia was already shared and wrote to the Secretary of State, Henry Stimson, who had also served as Governor General of the Philippines, informing him of a letter he had received from Davis. In the letter, Davis had suggested authorizing officials 'both in the Philippine government and the representatives of the State department' to keep more in touch, suggesting it 'might be

93 Ibid.

94 Memorandum to Department, American Consulate, Saigon French Indochina, 30 July 1931, Volume 134, Consular Posts, Saigon, French Indo-China, RG 84 Records of Foreign Service Posts, NARA, College Park.

95 Waterman to Secretary of State, Copies of Political Reports for the Governor General of the Philippines, 20 May 1931, Volume 133, Consular Posts, Saigon, French Indo-China, Records of Foreign Service Posts, RG 84, NARA, College Park.

96 In 1931, H.L. Stimson wrote Patrick Hurley, the US Secretary of War informing him that The Dutch Secret Service believed that the Philippine suppression of Chinese communist would lead to attempts to enter 'Netherland India.' Stimson to Hurley, Box 1296, General Classified Files, 1914–1945, RG 350 Bureau of Insular Affairs, NARA, College Park.

97 Department of State, Division of Western European Affairs to Castle, 14 May 1931, CDF 1930–1939, Box 5291, RG 59, Records of the State Department, NARA, College Park.

too late to take effective action' if reports had to go through Washington first.<sup>98</sup> In his response to the Secretary of War, Stimson agreed to the request and granted permission for US colonial officials and officers of the State Department stationed in Southeast Asia to participate. However, he emphatically stated that participation from members 'in the Philippine Government,' as Hurley had requested, could not be permitted. 'Our position in Asia differs substantially from that of the European colonial powers,' Stimson's secretary wrote in response, and therefore the Secretary of State did not want to institutionalize a 'special police regime toward any particular aspect of Asiatic politics.'<sup>99</sup> Essentially, US policymakers in the State Department instructed colonial officials to prioritize nationally focused anti-communist repression over inter-colonial anti-communist cooperation.

Inspired by the anti-colonial possibilities of interwar Marxist politics, the CPPI rooted their advocacy for Philippine independence in an analysis that placed US imperialism in the Philippines within the longer history of western imperialism in Asia and, in doing so, gave lie to the ideology of American imperial exceptionalism. In other words, in challenging the ideology of US colonial exceptionalism, the CPPI sought to undercut the central ideology of US colonial power in the Philippines and Americans' justification for the US presence in Southeast Asia in the first place. The refusal of US officials to join an inter-colonial police force in Southeast Asia was not an indication of their ambivalence towards communist inspired anti-colonial movements, but instead is due to the fact that an alliance with European empires would have undercut US claims to colonial exceptionalism. Joining such an alliance would have threatened to jeopardize the already unstable governing and racial fabric of the colonial world.

Although US politicians continually spoke in terms that emphasized US colonial difference, the instability of the colonial world and the USA's place within that world did not go unnoticed by the US press. In November 1931, nearly five months prior to the *New York Times*' piece on the 4000-member secret society in Pangasinan that opened this essay, the paper published an article that situated 'agrarian unrest' in the Philippines in the context of rebellion in the wider colonial world. The piece, titled 'Revolt Stirs Many Colonies,' argued that the 'Tayug affair' – in which an armed band of nearly 450 people attacked three separate government buildings in Tayug, a Pangasinan city with a population of nearly 15,000 – was one of nine rebellions that challenged colonial rule in 1931.<sup>100</sup> At least 29 individuals died in the deadly clash in Tayug, including 13 PC agents. The PC eventually

98 Patrick Hurley to Secretary of State, 8 May 1931, RG 59, CDF 1930–1939, Box 5291. In 1931, Laurits Swenson wrote that the Netherlands 'expressed hope that the Philippines would not be given independence' out of a fear of what the repercussions would be on colonial populations. Swenson also reported that the Dutch saw the Japanese as potential bulwark against communist influence. Swenson to Secretary of State, 20 December 1932, Box 1296, General Classified Files, 1914–1945, RG 350 Bureau of Insular Affairs, NARA, College Park.

99 W.R. Castle Jr. served as Henry Stimson's Undersecretary of State. W.R. Castle Jr. to Patrick Hurley, 20 July 1931, CDF 1930–1939, Box 5291, RG 59, Records of the State Department, NARA, College Park.

100 The article focuses on challenges in French, British, Japanese, American, and Portuguese colonies. 'Revolt Stirs Many in the Colonies,' *New York Times* (31 January 1931). For the *Times* coverage of the

quelled the uprising, and by the end of January 57 participants faced sedition and murder charges.<sup>101</sup> However, the *Times*' skepticism regarding the influence of 'Reds' in Pangasinan likely stemmed from the fact that officials offered mixed explanations of the causes that had led to the uprising. The Philippine press quickly branded the rebels as 'Colorums'—religious fanatics—and after an investigation, Philippine Secretary of the Interior Honorio Ventura argued that 'the recent massacre of Constabulary soldiers in Tayug was entirely due to religious fanaticism.'<sup>102</sup> The PC, on the other hand, argued that 'the affair was the result of agrarian oppression inflamed by communism.'<sup>103</sup> Religious fanaticism and communist exploitation, both explanations for why peasants in Pangasinan turned violent, both turned on the assumption that the 'emotional, unthinking masses' had been incited to violence by others. In retrospect, the response to the Tayug affair points to the ways that, even as US and Philippine colonial officials sought to transform the Philippine economy and society by integrating the Philippines into a global economy, they were forced to quickly learn how these transformations produced new forms of opposition. In other words, colonial officials were slow to come to terms with the ways that, during the course of 30 years of colonial rule, rural peasants, Manila's unionists, and even Filipino radicals living in the United States of America, developed critiques that US officials and Philippine elites represented as acts of irrational violence. However, by explaining that events such as the Tayug affair were the result of an ignorant peasantry, colonial rulers, both US and Filipino, were able to displace the notion that peasants acted out of their own critiques of the political economy of the colonial state. While US policymakers were careful about exerting power in ways that might allow anti-colonial communists to draw comparisons between the US and European imperialisms, blaming labor or peasants uprisings on foreign ideologies or the ambitions of local religious or political leaders helped enable the colonial state to intensify its anti-communist offensive.

The centrality of anti-communist politics to US interventions in decolonization – which, in many histories begins in 1945 – misses the ways that US and Filipino actors employed anti-communist politics in the colonial world while the Philippines

Tayug affair see: 'Battle in the Philippines' *New York Times* (11 January 1931); 'Rebels lose Battle for Philippine Town,' *New York Times* (12 January 1931).

101 Narciso Ramor, '57 Colorums face murder, sedition charges in court,' *Manila Bulletin* (20 January 1931).

102 'The Tayug Affair,' Philippine Files 3020–3300, Box 1842, 1922–1944, Regional File, Military Intelligence Division, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Records of the War Department, RG 165, NARA, College Park.

103 In addition to communism, colonial officials believed the organization, 'Ang Bagong Katipunan,' instigated peasants to commit violence. Ang Bagong Kaptipunan, led by future President Manuel Roxas, advocated for Philippine independence as well as a policy of economic nationalism. Though Ang Bagong Katipunan was not affiliated with the CPPI, the PC claimed the organization was becoming 'more red.' RG 165 Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Military Intelligence Division, Regional File, 1922–1944, Philippine Files 3020–3300, Box 1842. On Bagong Katipunan see: Y. Takagi, *Central Banking as State Building: Policymakers and Their Nationalism in the Philippines, 1933–1964* (Singapore 2016), 42–3; F. Golay, *United States and Philippine Relations, 1898–1946* (Madison, WI 1998), 292–3.



was still a colony of the United States of America.<sup>104</sup> Despite the violent repression of the CPPI in the 1930s, the idea that capitalism and US imperialism were the source of the deteriorating standards of life and labor in the Philippines lived on in Philippine politics, and continued to provoke repressive, anti-communist measures. Yet, by 1938, the rise of fascism in Europe and Japan, and the subsequent embrace of the 'popular front' in the USA – the strategy of western Communist Parties uniting against anti-fascism – prompted Franklin Roosevelt to pressure the Philippine Commonwealth into minimizing its persecution of the political left in the Philippines. On 24 December 1938, President of the Philippine Commonwealth, Manuel Quezon pardoned the convicted CPPI activists.<sup>105</sup>

Nonetheless, anti-communist sentiments did not disappear from the public sphere. In March of 1941, the Philippine secretary of labor, Leon G. Guinto, described to the graduating class of the Philippine School of Arts and Trades how 'Soviet or Russian communism' had 'stalked freely over our land like a grim specter sowing discontent, discord, and terror among the peace-loving population.'<sup>106</sup> For Guinto, communism had posed 'the greatest menace to the peace, security, and welfare of our people' because it undercut Philippine nationalism. By 'preaching internationalism among our people,' communism made them 'forget they are Filipino citizens.'<sup>107</sup> One could not be a Filipino nationalist, Guinto suggested, and an internationalist at the same time. Guinto's speech illustrated how interwar repression had work to build anti-communist politics into notions of Philippine nationalism. In fact, the lingering effects of the decade's earlier repressions would continue to animate political debate in the Philippines in the decades to come.

104 Though he begins his study in 1945, Gabriel Kolko claims the looking at US policy in the Philippines offers the clearest demonstration of US policies towards the Third World, G. Kolko, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy 1945–1980* (New York, NY 1988). On US critiques of French Colonialism and the supposed merits of US imperial management see: M. Bradley, *Imagining Vietnam and America: The Making of Postcolonial Vietnam, 1919–1950* (Chapel Hill, NC 2000), 59–67. Bradley also argues Franklin Roosevelt imagined the Philippines as an example of apt colonial management and frictionless independence. Jodi Kim argues that the conflict in Vietnam was interpreted via the imperial war and eventual American colonization in the Philippines. J. Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War* (Minneapolis, MN 2010).

105 The emergence of Popular Front politics was a response to the rise of fascism in the 1920s and 1930s. The particulars of the strategy, as they arose out of the Comintern, are complicated and contentious and the debates surrounding the utility of a popular front as a strategy in part reflect some of the internal debates and power struggles in the Soviet Communist Party. Michael Denning describes the US popular front as a 'radical historical bloc uniting unionist, communists, independent socialists, community activists, and émigré anti-fascists around laborist social democracy, anti-fascism, and anti-lynching'. In the Philippines the Popular Front was declared for similar anti-fascist reasons. M. Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth-Century* (London 1996).

106 Labor Bulletin, IV, 3–4, March–April 1941, Commonwealth of the Philippines, Department of Labor, RG 350, Bureau of Insular Affairs, NARA, College Park.

107 Ibid.

**Biographical Note**

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